taboo between him and his daughter. The nubile fiancée then lives with her mother in complete seclusion for an entire month. This is the kuingisha chisungu, literally, to make certain of the marriage-ability. The girl's mother ceases to wash and bathe herself /kuoa/; the girl stops shaving her hair /kubea/.

The Menstruation Dance. /Kuimba chisungu/. This phase is also called the kufumie chisungu, which means in honor of the nubile maiden. Ordinarily this ceremony takes place in June or July, when the "eleusin" /Translator's note: raggee, a cereal grass/ is ripe. This is a time of plenty and beer. The kinswomen of the young girl invite the nachimbusa (the female director of this ceremony). As a token of the invitation, they give her a present /lusomo/, such as a chicken, for example.

From the moment when dancing in honor of the nubile girl begins, all sweeping of the hut must cease, and only the throwing of ashes /mito/ into the mupunda (space between the door and the hall on the left of the entrance) may take place. The women then go to fetch the nakalamba, whose task it is to invite the other women to come and dance, sing and beat the drum. She is not shaved and must be white with dust /abuta tutu/. These are the words she uses for the invitation: "Companions, help me in my task" /Bamayo, ngafweni ko mulimo/. All the women assemble in the hut. The director /nachimbusa/ is the one who gives the sign for the singing to begin. Everyone falls in with the refrain by beating the drum or dancing. The nachimbusa, who also dances, is clothed in a genet skin and wears a tuft of feathers as head-gear. She sings: "Chimbusa chikulu chienda ne ngala" (I am the director who walks with her head covered by a tuft of feathers). The dance begins at about sundown and ends towards dawn. The songs for this dance are extremely varied, some innocent and praising, others equivocal and often obscene. They dance like this for an entire month. Food is brought in daily in order to give strength to those who are dancing.

The Beer. After the month of "menstruation dancing" is over, the local beer is prepared in large quantities. It is offered to the fiancé's mother. Early in the morning after the night when the beer was prepared, the /214/ women flock to the fiancée's house for the mbusa. They split into two groups; while some go to fetch white clay (mpemba) others gather fire-wood (nkuni).

fiancé goes home. The fiancée gets up and jumps across several mbusa 881
to the approving shouts of the women.

IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING. Questions and Instructions. It is necessary to instruct the fiancée with regard to certain facts pertaining to marriage. Only a few women will be with her; other women wait outside and beat the drum in order to prevent any indiscreet ears from listening to what is said to the fiancée. The nachimbusa and the nakalamba, in particular, question the fiancée on certain details with regard to menstruation. The fiancée has to answer truthfully and make a full confession; a lie could be fatal in these circumstances. The women then give her whatever counsel and advice is deemed desirable.

Beer. Once the meeting is over, an invitation to drink beer is issued 881
/fimalwa/. Everyone drinks beer: relatives, neighbors, friends. The 273
drinking and dancing last through the night.

Kuoa (the bath). At dawn the women accompany the fiancée to the 881
river; they take along some mbusa and sing: "Naya ku kuabika nkwa, 515
mairo kusala kuli ko." When they arrive at the river, they put the fiancée in the middle of the current, even if it is very cold. She has to stay there until the sun rises. The women then take her out of her river bed and wash her. They then braid the grass bracelets which they put around her wrists and ankles while singing: "This is how your [201]
husband will give you bracelets." They pick tall grass to make a kind of tuft /nsonshi/ from it, which they put on her head. While pouring water over the top of it, they sing: "Euma" (may she never be dry).

Ashes. When they return to the house, they find that the nakalamba 881
has swept away the ashes, which have not been swept since the fiancée started having her period. These ashes are thrown under a tree called mufungo, whose fruit is delicious. This is to insure that the marriage [824]
of the two be a good one /kunakilila/. Then a basket full of filundu (tree bark garments) is brought in. This is another of the fiancé's presents. The women rub the fiancée with oil until she is streaming. The fiancé does the same. Then the women dress the fiancée /218/ as well as her younger sister /nshindishi/ with all the filundu; this is the moment for presenting the gifts in the public square.

Mashikulo (presents). The fiancée, adorned in her most beautiful garments, is lead out from the bush; she is backed by women attendants who sing:: "Waleleka, mayo, waemba, waemba mune." (Oh,

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CHAPTER II

THE BEMBA DIET

Available Data.

262 A LIST of the chief Bemba foodstuffs is given at the end of this book (Appendix A). It will be seen that their environment provides them with a variety of foods—cereals, roots, pulses, green vegetables, fruit, honey, meat, fish, and salt, and they lack only one important constituent of our own dietary, namely, milk and all its products. But such a table of foodstuffs tells us very little about the diet itself. To study its composition we 146 must know the quantities of each particular constituent the individual Bemba eats in an average day or year, and this information is not yet available. The records already published of the food eaten by sample families in different villages[1] were based on rough approximations, and on observations made during a few weeks only of the year—a serious drawback where the seasonal variations are so great. Since that date Mrs. Gore-Browne has calculated the average yearly supply of the staple food available for each individual by measuring the contents of a number of granaries at harvest-time and she has also estimated the probable average consumption of one or two other foods.[2] But these calculations refer to one area only and to a limited number of foodstuffs. The data is obviously insufficient on which to base accurate generalizations as to the composition of the Bemba diet. These pages will therefore be limited to a description of the salient features of the dietary as a whole. Some of these are characteristic of the feeding habits of primitive peoples in general and are of interest by way of broad comparison with our own; others are limited to this particular area, and even to the tribe concerned.

262 All Bemba individuals can be reckoned as eating, roughly speaking,
273 the same type and quantity of food. Class distinctions practically do not exist in this respect. Chiefs certainly have a much more regular supply of food than commoners and drink very much more

[1] A. I. Richards and E. M. Widdowson, op. cit.

[2] This experiment covered 15 villages with a total population of 777 men, women, and children, and was made from July to January 1935–6. Report to the Diet Committee of N. Rhodesia, 1937 (unpublished).

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beer. In fact they often subsist entirely on the latter to the complete exclusion of solids. Their wives, children, and courtiers also eat on the average more than the ordinary family, so much so that natives describe especially lavish hospitality as 'housekeeping after the fashion of the capital' (*umusango wa ku musumba*). But the difference is one of certainty of supply rather than of greatly increased consumption per day, and a small class of individuals only are affected. Otherwise the rich man and his poorer neighbours eat very much the same throughout the year.

Sex distinctions are not marked either. The man gets a larger share of meat or any favourite relish, but there are no foods specially tabooed to women, and I do not think the inequality is any greater than that common in many working households in this country. Age distinctions in diet are not pronounced. Young boys between 10 and 16 are probably the worst-fed section of the community since they have to forage for themselves and have no regular portion allotted to them, but even then the difference is not a striking one. Geographical variations in the food-supply certainly exist, but they are limited chiefly to differences in the amount of meat and fish consumed and not to the staple food. Therefore for all general purposes the following account may be taken as applying to the population as a whole.

Variations from Hunger to Plenty.

The most pronounced feature of this dietary is its alternation between hunger and plenty, a characteristic common to African peoples in areas where the distribution of rain allows only one season of cultivation a year, and where one staple crop is relied upon. In this territory the existence of a definite scarcity is noticed at once by the most casual observer. The Bemba constantly talk about 'hunger months' as distinguished from food months. At the end of the rainy season they regularly expect a shortage, whether it is severe or not. When the scarcity becomes marked the whole appearance of village life is changed. For adults meals are reduced from two to one a day, and beer is rarely if ever brewed. Children who seem to munch extras all day long in the plentiful season (April to October) are reduced to a single dish late in the day. In one bad year I saw cases of elderly people who ate nothing during the course of a day, and though this is not common, most adult natives can remember occasions when they went two days

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Other activities are also affected. There is little or no dancing in the hunger months, partly owing to the absence of beer.[1] Few journeys are planned, and the children tend to play listlessly. Usually more good-tempered than the average English baby, they whimper at the slightest provocation. I found it difficult to get informants to concentrate for more than short periods at this time of the year.

The physical effects of a seasonal shortage of food on the health of a people and the growth rate of their children has not yet been investigated, but from a sociological point of view there are other effects to be considered besides the lowering of energy due to actual under-feeding which the natives themselves recognize and describe (cf. p. 50). In a society in which people regularly expect to be hungry annually, and in which traditions and proverbs accustom them to expect such a period of privation, their whole attitude towards economic effort is affected. In some primitive tribes it is considered shameful for an individual or a whole community to go hungry.[2] It is something unexpected, and to be resisted with energy. Among the Bemba scarcity is within the ordinary run of experience, and accepted as such. This fact has a subtle but very powerful effect on their ideas of wealth and their incentives to work (cf. Chap. XIX).

Composition of the Diet.

The Bemba diet is in a sense a simple one since it is composed very largely of one cereal food—the finger millet already described. The bulk of each meal consists of a porridge made of this flour, and the subsidiary foods, meat or vegetable, are eaten with it in small quantities only (about half a pound of the latter to five pounds of the former). For their nutrition the Bemba depend almost entirely on the amount of millet they are able to get, and the seasonal variations from hunger to plenty consist in effect of the shortage or absence of this particular grain.[3]

[1] No ceremonies such as initiation rites or the founding of a village are carried out in the last moon of the rains, *Kutumpu* (March), probably for this reason. But it is also interesting that the people give ill health and bad luck as reasons for not holding ceremonies in this month. They say: 'March is an unlucky month. Look how many people fall ill at that moon.'

[2] Cf. Malinowski's account of the Trobriand islanders, who consider hunger shameful and give all their efforts to displaying food and producing it in excess. *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, 1935, vol. i, p. 227; *Argonauts of the W. Pacific*, 1922, p. 109.

[3] Dr. Widdowson calculates that the Bemba gets 75 per cent. of his calories

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cried light-heartedly, hitting her stomach, 'I have been turned into a young girl, my heart is so light.'[1]

In an hour or so men and women gathered on the village square and burst into spontaneous dancing of a type I had never seen in ordinary life. Young men charged arm in arm up and down in lines singing Bemba and European songs. They imitated mission drilling and play-acting. Young girls played singing games amid screams of laughter. Drums beat, and the older women and babies clapped and shouted. It was like some wild Dionysiac rabble, and indeed these people might have been taken for drunkards, except that they were better tempered, more energetic, and showed more initiative in inventing new games. The next day, they went to work early, declaring that their arms were strong. The excitement on this particular occasion was admittedly unusual, but I have described it as an example of the extreme delight of the Bemba in the sight of meat, and of meat in such profusion that it could be used for once in an utterly reckless way.

(*d*) *Other cravings.* Old men who have become accustomed to drinking beer say that they feel their stomachs asking for beer. Elderly people also long for snuff and will go to any lengths to get even a small pinch. *Kuba no mupatikishya ku fwaka* means 'to be in a state of begging for snuff', but I do not know if this craving has any correlation with dietetic deficiencies. Pregnant women are expected to be liable to pika hungers and are said to 'ask their husbands suddenly to get them such and such'. They regularly pull lumps of clay from the walls of their huts to chew, and declare their mothers taught them this custom. I have heard that some children also eat clay, but I never saw this done.

(*e*) *Monotony and diet cravings.* Most Bemba seem to be specially liable to sudden cravings for different foods during the season of shortage. Whether this is due to definitely physiological reactions or to the excessive monotony of the diet at this season I do not know. To the European Bemba meals seem insipid and tedious at all seasons of the year. The foods available are not numerous, and even then they cannot all be used at any one time (cf. Chart on p. 41). There are a number of variations in the methods of cooking known, but, as in England, many of these require too much time for their preparation as a general rule. In one village

[1] *Nasanguka naba mukashyana ico mutima uayanguka.*

1/1 [The division and eating of the meat from a large antelope shot by the author. - Analyst]
2/1 [Erratum, should be "pica", = craving for unnatural foods. - A.]

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dry as if there wasn't any saliva in them'.[1] It is very important to natives to get the right proportion of relish to porridge. Every one wants to get as much relish as possible, and here the rules of procedure are fixed. An old man may tear off a lump of *ubwali* and make it into a hollow spoon. This he will dip into the liquid relish and then pick up as much relish as possible (*ukuleme nkondwa*). The child, or inferior, may only just dip the porridge into the relish to moisten it (*ukutumpika*), and thus the proportion of vegetable varies very much according to age. A young man will not dare *ukuleme nkondwa* until he is given the permission by his father, said to be granted when the boy is able to do a full day's work in the gardens. A girl should wait the invitation of her mother before trying to take an adult portion of relish, and on the few occasions when a wife eats with her husband, in the privacy of their hut at night, she is supposed merely to dip her porridge in the stew like a child, until she reaches middle or old age when, among the Bemba, all sex disabilities seem to disappear.

Bemba eating customs can therefore be said to differ considerably from our own, both as regards the rhythm of meals, the regularity of daily intake, and the serving and rate of consumption, but in each case the manner of eating is just as precisely defined by cultural rule and related as strictly to the general economic system and social grouping of the people concerned. Even the proportion of liquid to solid, or relish to porridge, is prescribed by etiquette.

Beer Drinking.

Bemba beer (*ubwalua*) is one of their most important foodstuffs. It is made from the staple cereal itself.[2] It is a valuable source of vitamin B in which the diet is otherwise deficient.[3] On the day when it is drunk very few natives eat any other form of food, and some individuals, mostly chiefs, subsist on it entirely from day to day. But *ubwalua* is far more than a mere food. It is the people's only kind of entertainment, the chief break in the monotony of

[1] Information collected by Mrs. Gore-Browne.

[2] The Bantu peoples make beer from a number of different sources according to their environment, eleusine, Kaffir-corn, maize, cassava, bananas, honey, and, in the Congo, wine from palms and sugar-cane. The Bemba preference for millet beer is shared by a number of people such as the Bisa (of the swamps), or the Venda of the Transvaal (H. Stayt, *The Bavenda*, p. 35) who grow the cereal specially for the purpose.

[3] Kaffir beer is included as part of the rations issued to mine-workers on the Rand scale chiefly for this reason.

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their village life, and, as in most other Bantu societies, the common and sometimes the essential way of fulfilling social obligations. Beer is the present of honour between kinsmen. It is carried to chiefs as tribute, used to reward labour, or given as an offering to spirits. Nowadays, it may be one of the few ways by which a woman, left deserted by her husband, can make money for clothes.[1] Men cultivate extra ground in order to have enough millet for brewing. Abundance of beer is the glory of a commoner's hospitality, or a chief's court. Without it tribal councils cannot be held, and marriage or initiation ceremonies do not take place. For all these reasons it is impossible to describe the physical effects of native beer-drinking without knowing the part it plays in the Bemba's whole social life. *Ubwalua* is served in big calabashes holding about 2 or 3 gallons, or in disused petrol tins. It consists of a thick brown sludge to which hot water is added constantly throughout the evening so that the brew gets gradually weaker and weaker.[2] It is drunk through a hollow reed two or three gulps at a time. It is a cloudy fluid, often full of gritty particles, with a clear sharp taste not unlike the bitter flavour of English beer. Most natives become positively lyrical as to its qualities. They say it makes them rejoice (*ukusansamuka*) and that it warms their hearts (*ukukafyo mutima*)—the ordinary phrase used for getting excited and also angry. Old councillors at the chief's court who have become used to a regular supply of beer, complain bitterly if they are deprived of it. They say that it is bad for them to eat 'cold food', i.e. ordinary meals, and that they need something to 'burn their stomachs just there' (with a hand laid on the spot), and in fact beer must be much easier to digest in old age than most other Bemba foods.

Beer is recognized as making a man more talkative, liable to quarrel, or indulge in illicit love-making, and men whose hearts get hot quickly, to repeat the native phrase, are avoided at beer-drinks, if possible, because they may involve their friends in legal liabilities. I have even heard of cases where Bemba refused to marry into families with a reputation for becoming excitable when drunk. But drunkenness itself is not despised. In fact the drunkard

[1] The sale of beer is illegal in this district, but it is practically impossible to prevent the trading of small quantities.

[2] In samples taken at the beginning and at the end of an evening respectively, Dr. Widdowson found that the alcohol content varied from 4·44 per cent. to 2·10 per cent. (I am indebted to Mr. Douglas Miller of the Education Department for dispatching these samples.)

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273 733 is regarded with a kind of laughing tolerance or envy and, as will be seen, the tribal drinking customs make it impossible for any one except a chief to become a regular drunkard. A commoner may brew beer more often than his fellows, or feel its effect quicker, but it is difficult for him actually to get much more to drink than they do. In any case, the drunkard is regarded generally as an irresponsible individual, and of anybody who commits adultery or assault when under the influence of drink, the phrase 'an affair of beer' (*umulandu ua bwalua*) is used quite tolerantly.

273 Some of the deleterious effects of alcohol are recognized. I never heard any complaints or jokes about double vision made, but have several times seen natives refuse to go out tree-cutting the morning after a beer-drink because of 'beer before the eyes' (*ubwalua pa menso*), meaning, I think, fear of giddiness or lack of co-ordination. Headaches are quite common the day after a big beer party. To the European, the remarkable thing about native drinking is the speed with which the people seem to get excited and garrulous. The percentage of alcohol is probably rarely more than 4 per cent., and many of the company get very little to drink during an evening. But it must be remembered that the *ubwalua* is drunk hot which may increase its potency, and also that it is drunk very much less regularly than in this country. The Paramount Chief 643 273 told me that a great ruler should drink beer every day without exception. Otherwise, if he drank only once or twice a week, he would become drunk like a commoner and stagger about and give bad judgements in court. 'His chieftainship would suffer' (*ukuti bufumu buonaule*). This was obviously in the nature of a 'rationalization', but it is true that chiefs who drink regularly seem to get bemused, but never violently drunk as commoners occasionally do.

273 574 [521] But it is probably the fact that beer-drinking is such a social event that accounts for the people's quick sense of exhilaration and even intoxication. Natives gather together from surrounding villages to drink at their relatives' huts and exchange gossip, and this is in itself an interesting occasion in a society in which the local group is so small. Further, beer is drunk by the maximum number of people who can crowd into one hut. At an average brewing three or four calabashes might be available for distribution, and of these one would be given to the headman to share with the elders of the village, another might be given to the son-in-law of the brewer to drink with the younger men of the village, and a

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third kept in the owner's hut for his near family or special friends. But in each case, after the formal drinking has begun, the original guests are joined by others who enter with a polite salutation, take a short pull at the beer, and stay for a short talk. When there is only one calabash to be divided in the village, each inhabitant will probably join the crowd in the hut at one time or another in the evening. Thus there is a constant coming and going of men and women, and the children who are too small to be left at home. Dancing nearly always accompanies the drinking. In these circumstances it is not surprising that there should be the maximum amount of excitement with the minimum of alcohol consumed. Old women usually drink with the men. It is considered bad form for young girls to do so, and women nursing small children are afraid to join in for fear that the baby might be harmed by contact with a hearth touched by some one ritually impure during the confusion of the evening's drink. Where there is enough beer therefore the women have a calabash of their own.

The guests come together in a condition of pleasurable anticipation. They crowd into a hut about eight feet in diameter and sit huddled on the floor side by side in the closest possible physical contact. The heat is terrific, as the fire is piled high to keep the water boiling and to give light to the company. Sweat pours down naked shoulders. Sometimes singing begins, and the whole company rock to and fro clapping their hands, or they may be wedged still tighter against the wall, and a space cleared for a solo dancer and a couple of big drums. The watchers sway, tap with their feet, and clap the rhythm. At other times the drums stand outside in the village square, and young men and women stream out of the hut to line up for the big round dance—*icila*, or the line dance—the *ngwai*. In these conditions the excitement of social intercourse is probably at least as potent as the influence of alcohol.[1] Real drunkenness, in the form in which we know it, is more often to be found in the modern villages where a man can 'drink alone', or with a few friends and when dancing does not accompany the drinking.

It is difficult to estimate the quantity of beer drunk by the Bemba during a year or an average night. In the harvest months—May to

[1] A compound-manager at Wankie Mine told me that he had found the same amount of intoxication produced among the mine employees at a Christmas beer-drink with an alcohol content of about half that which was usual. He explained it by saying, 'I think they had been expecting to get drunk at Christmas for so long.'

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273 July or August—I should say that beer was brewed in most villages
433 about once a week. In the subsequent months the supply would be less frequent, and during the scarce season at the end of the rains *ubwalua* would only be found regularly at a chief's court. If asked how often a woman should brew a year, the answer was anything from four to six times, which, reckoning about 80 lb. of millet to one brew, would mean an annual expenditure of about 400 lb. of millet on beer.[1] Ten brews in one year was described to me as excessive, with the added criticism: 'That is a woman who likes beer.' But
[438] there is no doubt that in villages near white settlements, people brew much more often than this because of the profits they hope to make from the sale, and they even buy grain for the purpose.[2]

273 On any one night, the amount drunk per head is limited by the
574 rules of social etiquette. Under village conditions drinking follows
576 a definite order of precedence. The guests usually arrive between four and five in the afternoon, after the day's work is done. They enter one by one shouting: '*Hodi*?—May I come in?' at the door and crouch on the newly cleaned floor side by side. Water is bubbling in a big pot over the fire in charge of the woman of the house, and the calabash, or sometimes more than one, stands ready on the floor, for water may not be poured on the drink (*ukubiko bwalua*) until the honoured guests are assembled. The owner then rinses out his mouth with water and spits on the ground calling a blessing of the ancestral spirits (*ukupala mate*) for a peaceful beer-drink. He then hands round the drinking reed ceremoniously to the eldest man present, who sucks the first draught, pronounces on the quality of the beer, and hands the reed back to the host. Drinking then follows in order of age and status. The old men near the calabash talk and take long pulls at the *ubwalua* in turn, while the elder women, if present, sit farther off, and rise occasionally to take a couple of drinks and then return to their place. Young

[1] Out of an annual production of roughly 2,400 lb. of grain per family (from U. Moffat's report to the Diet Committee of N. Rhodesia, 1933). It must be remembered, however, that the woman does not usually cook on the same day as she provides beer and that she is brewing for the whole village and not for her household alone.

[2] At Kasaka village during the months succeeding the harvest (1933) out of 11 women, 3 had brewed once; 2 twice; 2 three times, 2 four times, 1 five times, and 1 six times. In the figures collected by Mrs. Gore-Browne 15 villages had brewed on an average 10 times each in 6 months from June to January, using 9,400 lb. of millet, but figures are difficult to verify and the prohibition on the sale of beer makes women reluctant to tell the truth on this point.

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men come up to the pot later and kneel to take a short draught, usually in silence. Boys might be invited to take a drink as a joke by one of their elders, but they would never stay in the hut all the evening. Young girls chiefly drink at special women's beer-drinks, but on a general occasion they sometimes sit outside in groups of four or five and dare each other to go in to the drinking hut, with much giggling and jokes. I never saw them stay more than about a quarter of an hour. But all such additions to the circle take place later in the evening when the beer is already weak. It is clear in fact that with the formality practised under village conditions, the bulk of the three or four calabashes brewed at one go (*amatimba*) is distributed through the whole community but that the elder men and women have the largest proportion of this supply, the young men a smaller share, and the young women and boys an occasional drink in between dancing. Thus it might be estimated that the average consumption on any one night would be somewhere near 1½ pints per head for an older man or woman, 1 pint for a younger, and about ½ for a young girl.

Under modern conditions these rules of etiquette are often broken. There is apparently little obligation to share beer that is bought with money, and even when the owner has brewed her own supply there is a tendency for it to be shared with four or five people only, or even for it to be drunk alone. In such cases natives will start drinking in the morning and sit at it all day. The formalities of polite invitation and the order of drinking all go by the board, and in the circle of villages round a town like Kasama it would be fair to say that a large proportion of the younger men are regularly drunk every Saturday and Sunday in a way that is quite unlike the slight intoxication of an ordinary village beer-drink. On the other hand, in one or two modern communities, i.e. those on the grounds of some of the protestant missions or in the near neighbourhood, a large percentage of teetotallers is common, since the pledge is taken by many church members. But at present no other substitute form of entertainment seems to have been discovered for the Bemba, since tea is a prohibitive price in this area and the various non-alcoholic drinks made of millet, such as have been issued from time to time by different mining companies, are not commonly made. The drinking of beer, therefore, besides providing a valuable addition to a poor diet, continues to be essential to a normal existence in this tribe.

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The liquid can be used to cook gruel with millet or Kaffir-corn flour. *Umusuku* fruits can be squeezed with the hands to make a similar drink.

Beer-making.

The process of beer-making (*ukulongo bwalua*) is the longest and most skilled operation the Bemba housewife has to undertake. The brewing may take anything from four to seven days, and the varying temperature and moisture of the air affect its success, so that with the most experienced brewer there is always an element of luck. No housewife could give me exact instructions as to the quantities of grain used and the time taken, but was apparently guided by a judgement based on long experience, or as she herself would express it, with vigour: 'Young girls can't make beer. Only we elders know how to brew.'

The process can be best understood by a description of a concrete case. On this occasion two carrying baskets of unthreshed grain (about 80 lb.) were taken from a granary early in the morning and the whole quantity was threshed. This was heavy work and took most of the morning. In the evening the brewer lined a carrying basket with broad leaves and filled it with the threshed grain. She carried it down to the river and stood it in the shallow water near the bank. This is the ordinary method of starting germination in the grain, and baskets of millet may often be seen soaking in any small stream near to a village. It takes anything from 12 to 24 hours for the grain to begin to sprout, according to the heat of the weather. In this case the tiny shoots could be seen on each grain by midday on the following day, and the sprouted millet (known as *imimena*, from *ukumena*, to sprout) was then spread out flat on a sleeping mat (*ubutanda*) to dry in the sun. The drying must be complete and the beer may be spoilt if the weather is too damp at this stage.

The next stage consisted in the preparation of the yeast, the work of the third day. For this purpose a small portion of the *imimena* is ground into flour and placed at the bottom of a big water-pot. Boiling water is poured on top and the mixture is put aside to ferment. This is the process known as *ukushimpula*, and the thin sour gruel (*umusunga*) which results is left to stand until it begins to froth and bubble and finally to rise over the top of the pot. Temperature again affects the rate at which the

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● 273 mixture will ferment, and in the present case it was two days before the process was complete owing to a sudden chill in the weather.

The yeast had now to be cooked (*ukuipiko musunga*). A great cooking-pot of boiling water was made ready on the fire and into this the bubbling *musunga* was emptied, the mixture being stirred off and on for about three hours and then left to cool. The remains of the *musunga* left behind in the vessel were heated up with more water next day and added to the main body of the ferment so that nothing should be lost. This is the process known as *kuipula* (to take the pot off the fire). The *musunga* was then left another two days to rise again.

In the meantime the rest of the *imimena* grain has been ground into flour and set aside in two or three flat winnowing baskets until the last process of brewing (*ukupoto bwalua*) was reached. This took place on the 28th, i.e. eight days after the setting of the grain to sprout. It is considered the climax of the whole operation, usually watched with excitement by near relatives of the brewer. The floor is freshly mudded over for the occasion and the winnowing baskets of ground *imimena* laid out on it. The brewer then dips a gourd into the *umusunga* now bubbling and frothing once more, and ladles the sour mixture on to the waiting baskets, stirring it thoroughly into the flour, until a thick brown sludge results. After standing for some hours this sludge is then transferred to calabashes and the brewing process is then complete. 'It is beer now' the family explained. After a delay of anything from 24 to 48 hours the *ubwalua* would be ready to drink, diluted as usual with hot water.[1]

This whole process took nine days, rather a lengthy brewing owing to a sudden change in the weather. Other brews I have timed have taken seven days, or even five in warmer weather. The length of time taken has important sociological bearings. It means that beer can never be made available suddenly, but can only be produced after a good deal of planning and work, and under

[1] Miss Hilda Shaw, Lecturer at the National Training College of Domestic Subjects, London, commented on this method of brewing: 'Whilst the sprout is developing the ferment diastase is forming and this converts some of the starch in the grain into sugar and boiling water which is then added will destroy all ferments and extract the sugar. On exposure to warm air, wild yeast will collect and multiply in this and form alcohol. The subsequent boiling will, of course, destroy most of the yeast.'

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conditions which do not make it possible to be absolutely sure of success. It is also impossible to brew in secret. The whole village knows when the grain has sprouted, how long it has taken to dry, and whether the different processes, *ukushimpula* or *ukupota*, have taken place. Children discuss them eagerly. *Ubwalua* cannot therefore be concealed.

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institution is worth mentioning as an example of a permanent relationship of exchange of food for labour, and as illustrating in an extreme case the Bemba concept that rights over labour include rights over movement, residence, and life and death.[1] The memory of this institution, still very much alive to-day, certainly affects the attitude of black to white and the ideas of service the older men at any rate are prepared to accept.

Another form of organized labour is the custom known as *ukupula* by which a man or a woman, but usually the latter, can offer service to a householder temporarily, most commonly at a busy time of the year such as harvest. In return he or she gets food, either in the form of a share of the family dish, or a basket of the grain that is being reaped. In such cases the employer is either a distant kinsman who would not be otherwise under any strong obligation to help, or he is no relative at all. The worker is considered to be in an inferior position and spoken of contemptuously or pityingly, as we might of a beggar.[2] Actually, the woman who goes *ukupula* may do exactly the same work as one of the near relatives of the family, and may be given much the same food, but she does not receive what she does by right of kinship, and the phrase *Alepula-pula-fye*, which might be translated, 'she lives by picking up casual jobs', is usually uttered with a rather scornful shrug of the shoulders. Only an absolutely destitute person or an imbecile would reckon to subsist in this way as a regular thing;[3] but as a temporary form of support, *ukupula* has become very common lately as one of the means by which the very large percentage of deserted wives can eke out an existence during the bad times of the year. Travellers returning from the mines, who can no longer reckon to be fed on the march as in the old days, also resort to the practice on occasion. I have seen them do an afternoon's hoeing on their arrival at one of the villages on the main road in order to secure an evening meal.

Another type of service rewarded by cooked food is the communal work done by a man in return for beer. Such working-bees,

[1] A chief could sell a slave to Arab traders, known as *ukupoza* 'to throw away'. A commoner could not do this, but a *salume* could enslave his *mwipwa* in compensation for some legal fault of his own.

[2] *Ukupula* is often loosely applied to all forms of scrounging, but technically speaking means labour in return for food only. *Ukulomba* means to beg in the sense of asking a favour from a superior, such as a chief or an ancestral spirit, with no possibility of adequate return.

[3] The type of person who would have probably become voluntarily enslaved in the old days.

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437 476 273 common in most primitive societies, are known as *ukutumya* among the Bemba. They consist of groups of men organized to do a day's tree-cutting or hoeing, or of women gathered to pile branches for burning or to reap. Most of the able-bodied men or women of a village would join such an outing, and *ukutumya* parties are usually reckoned as agreeable parties of friends and relatives, as well as a useful means of breaking the back of a big job such as clearing the bush or putting new grass-land under the hoe. The work rarely lasts more than four hours, and the toilers then return to the village, jubilant at the prospect of the beer ahead. However, in spite of the festive note of such *ukutumya* parties, there is a definite exchange of work and food involved. The hostess sends round a dipper of beer to the hut of the worker early in the morning (*ukulalike nkoko*), theoretically so that every one may taste the brew and be assured that the drink is worth working for.[1] The *ubwalua* itself is set aside for those who have been working during the day. I noticed on one occasion that the women returning from a hoeing party sharply rebuked one of the men of the village for coming to beg a drink from their calabash. They said he must wait until they had drunk their fill. He could have a pull later in the afternoon, when the beer was weak.

In any one year quite an appreciable amount of grain is actually used by the Bemba for *ukutumya* parties of this sort. I should assume that most householders brewed at least once during the season for this purpose, and the desire to have a surplus of grain is sometimes stated to be due to the wish to have 'plenty of beer to brew for my friends when they do my work'. The system is inefficient from the economic point of view perhaps, since the proportion of the day spent in beer-drinking is very large compared to that spent on actual work.[2] However, *ukupula* does give a man what he most wants at certain seasons, i.e. a supply of labour for the heaviest enterprises, such as tree-cutting and hoeing, and it has considerable importance at the present day, since deserted wives, without many relatives to help them, may be unable to get a house or a granary built in any other way. Old women congregated near the town of Kasama wander about from village to village collecting baskets of grain by *ukupula* labour, and

[1] Actually, any Bemba would rather drink sour beer than none at all.

[2] It is not uncommon to find the party returning at 11 or 12 a.m. in order to have time to enjoy the beer!

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finally, after some weeks' work, brew beer, and invite men to a *kutumya* party so that they may get some necessary granary or house built.

Distribution at the Chief's Court.

The most considerable exchange of food for labour is that which takes place at the capital, whether in payment of tribute workers (*ba mulasa*), courtiers, executive officials, or visiting councillors on tribal business. This whole system of distribution illustrates clearly not only the political and economic ideas of the Bemba but the rules of hospitality already described. Each man or woman who works for the chief[1] should be given food. The men are provided with porridge and relish cooked by the chief's wives, and the women unthreshed millet to prepare for themselves. The workers eat together in one group. The boys and young men who act as personal servants to the chief are also fed separately with cooked food, being mostly unmarried men. Older courtiers, heads of sections of the village (*bafilolo*), or messengers (*bakapasso*) are treated in more honourable fashion. They are sent a share of meat sent in as tribute, or invited to share a pot of beer on the veranda of the chief's hut. At Citimukulu's court, tribal councillors (*bakabilo*), if present in twos or threes, are treated in the same way, but if the whole council is present on matters of state, they will probably stay for a week or ten days, and then they are regularly fed by the chief's wives. In this case the whole council—some forty strong—is divided into groups (*nsaka*) based on descent and historical association.[2] Each of these groups must be provided with a separate basket of porridge and a dish of relish, and sits eating back to back in the chief's enclosure. Honoured visitors, such as members of the royal family, are sent flour, chickens, or beer by the chief and cooked food by his head wife (*umukolo*).

The organization of these supplies is naturally a complicated business. At Citimukulu's court during nine months (April 1933 to January 1934) 561 men and 324 women came to do *umulasa* labour and were fed at least one day of their service. The *bakabilo* to the number of about forty met at least twice during the year, while it is impossible to estimate the number of other persons engaged on a big chief's business. The distribution is of such

[1] Cf. Chapter XIII. About three days a year at the present time.
[2] The *nsaka* of Katongo, of Citikafula, of Cikutwe, and of Citimukulu.

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Europeans,[1] and beer to Africans resident in the town.[2] The houses had, therefore, been rebuilt twice since the founding of the village in 1924, but one site was only a hundred yards or so from the other. A third re-building was being planned during my visit on a site also in the near vicinity. Hence it is likely that this village may remain fixed for a period of twelve years, instead of the usual four or five.

The soil round this village varied tremendously. Some of the cultivators were gardening on a strip of light, sandy soil covered with scrub, and of these nine failed completely, even though four could probably have produced better results by hoeing more thoroughly. In a series of newer gardens, thirty-three gardeners were cultivating a different type of soil round the present village. Of these thirty-three, eighteen had made successful gardens—twelve on good soil, four on bad ground enriched through village refuse, and two because the owners, two elderly widows, 'had hoed so much that they managed to get food out of sand'. Ten gardeners had failed, seven through the poverty of the soil, two through not weeding sufficiently, and one because old potato runners had remained in the soil and were 'stealing the food of the maize'. Twenty-six other gardens had been made on better soil some distance away near the river-bed, and here the proportion of success was much higher. Thirteen of these gardens were on black loamy soil, and eight on the rich black mud of the river bank; two on a streak of clay; one on sand and two on the edge of an old village site. Of these twenty-six gardens, nineteen were successful, six were still being tried, and only one was a failure—said to be due to insufficient hoeing. On the other hand, those gardeners who were growing maize on the deserted house-sites of their village were nearly all successful. This maize was two or three feet higher than that on the surrounding village beds, and only two out of the fifteen disused house-sites were failures, due to want of judgement in sowing the patch too soon before the rubble of the old house had dissolved in the rain. Thus it will be seen that, of the total number of gardens, twenty out of ninety-two, or nearly twenty-two per cent., were unsuccessful, chiefly, in native eyes,

[1] Four inhabitants owned between them fifteen cows, nine sheep, six bulls, and three goats.

[2] The brewing of beer for sale is, though illicit, one of the few means of livelihood open to an elderly single woman, and many widows or deserted wives drift to the villages near the town for this purpose.

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Harvest ceremony. Bringing beer to the chiefs. Npika district, 1933. Note beer in gourd and man about to roll on his back to salute the dread[1] chiefs.

[1] [should read 'dead'-A.]

Shrines to ancestral spirits built outside a village.

[facing p. 378]

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769 796 651 spirits, and even when the foods of the bush—caterpillars, mushrooms, or ants—are very plentiful, a special *mukabilo* (Munuca) performs an *ukuposela* ceremony to offer 'the owners of the land' the fruits of the bush 'because they have given us a lot this year'.

769 796 At the capital, according to the usual custom, the new foods are exposed in the *benye* house instead of being placed at the end of the headman's bed. They are afterwards cooked in the *kamitembo*, the sacred kitchen (cf. p. 148), and then ritually tasted by the chief, his children, and the *bamukabenye*. This is the act known as *ukusumata*, 'to taste', as distinct from *ukuposela*, 'to offer'. It was possibly done in commoners' villages formerly, but now only at the chief's court.

769 796 273 834 A more impressive form of the *ukusumata* takes place at times of great plenty at the capital,[1] when beer made from the new Kaffir corn is ritually tasted by the chief and all his *bakabilo*—a symbolic presentation of the hierarchical order of Bemba society. For this special rite (*ukusumata masaka*) the *bakabilo* must be summoned, and the chief purified. Beer is first brewed by the head wife in the *kamitembo*, and after purification the Paramount and his wife sleep here, keeping sex taboos till the beer is brewed. This is known as *ukulindilo musunga*, 'to watch for the yeast'.[2] During this time flour made from the new crop has been exposed in the *benye* house for the blessing of the *imipashi*, and some of this is then sprinkled on the sacred beer, to be drunk by the Paramount and the chief *bakabilo* inside the *benye* house, and by the rest in order of seniority outside. After this, the Munuca rubs some of the sacred flour on the chests of the *bakabilo* present, and thus makes them free to celebrate first-fruit rites of their own in their own villages. Later a basket must be carried to the shrines of Kafula, a chief who died of smallpox and was therefore buried alone near the present capital. If liked, the *ulupepo lukalamba* can then begin. Such a ceremony is obviously one of the elaborate alternative forms of the economic rites described above. It was performed apparently three times in Sampa's reign and three times in Cikwanda's. The present Citi-

[1] 'When the land is boiling over'—*Icalo calilabila*.

[2] Compare the function of the Mulemba Cimfwembe in 'watching the trees of the land' and of the Kamenge in 'watching the chief's seeds'. The *cishiko*, the lighter of the chief's sacred fire, has also to 'watch' the new fire when a village is being built. There seems to me some protective power in the presence of a man keeping sex taboos.

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mukulu tried to organize it again in 1933, but hunger forced his wives to eat up the supply of Kaffir corn he had planted for the purpose, and he was never able to collect sufficient grain to make the beer.

(*e*) *Thanksgiving rites.* In Bisa districts a special rite of thanksgiving as distinct from the *ukuposela* is performed in August to September or after the main millet harvest has been reaped. This is known as *ukupelo bwalua kuli mfumu*, 'to give the (dead) chiefs beer'. For instance, near Shiwa Ndandu in August 1933 I found special fire-stands (*amafwasa*) had been built in the open near three village spirit shrines especially for the heating of water for this beer. The villagers gathered round the shrines, men one side and women the other, and the headman began to call on the chiefs of the land: 'You, Sir Matipa, Sir Maluma Lubande, you, the owner of the chiefs of the Bisa. You know your companions, all the other chiefs. Call them that they come to drink our beer. We have come to pray for life. Make us go in peace. We have brewed beer. We have brought it to you to honour you. And then we beg for peace. May we eat food! We pray for porridge. May the blood of animals be seen too! Save us from the locusts'—a pause—'Now I have finished.'

After this the wife of the headman poured hot water on the big gourd of beer standing by the spirit hut and she drank, afterwards rolling on the ground in the royal salute 'because she was the owner who brewed the beer' (*ni mwine ualongo bwalua*). She was followed by the rest of the village in order of age,[1] and dancing and singing began round the shrines, each performer rolling on the ground as to a chief.

Such a ceremonial drinking at the spirit shrines may have been much more common in all Bemba villages formerly. I have heard of it happening after a hunt at the nets, and have seen gourd beer-dippers lying in spirit shrines ready for a beer drink. But in this Bisa district, harvest ceremonies of this kind are performed to this day, and they are followed in some cases by a ritual hunt to discover the will of the spirits.

All such harvest or first-fruit rites must be considered as a means of sacralizing the gathering of the new harvest, encouraging the community to handle the essential food supplies with reverence, or emphasizing, as Radcliffe-Browne would say, its 'social

[1] Except the headman, who may only drink in the village.

231 encouraged and there are now a few herds in the valley. Horses and mules are lacking. The donkey ridden by Gamitto when he made his entry in 1830 was the first of the species to be seen in the country.(1) The villagers keep poultry and some small stock, mainly goats and sheep.

FISHING

226 Fish abound in the Luapula, the riverside lagoons and Lakes Mweru and Mofwe. Livingstone collected the vernacular names of thirty-nine species caught in Lake Mweru.(2) Some fishing goes on all the year round but the season, when the men move to the fishing camps on the river islands, extends from September to January. In the shallow marshland pools the fish are speared while laying their eggs. In flowing water they are trapped in conical wickerwork baskets set in rocky falls or in the openings in a weir.(3) On Lake Mweru they are caught from canoes with hook and line. On the Luapula the people go out in their dugouts at night and drive the fish into seine-nets (*ubukonde*) by hitting the surface of the water with wooden discs attached to poles.(4) Large-scale fishing is done with [177] drag-nets (*umukwau*) which require several men to pull them. Formerly nets [278] were made by men from barkcloth cord. Nowadays nylon and cotton nets are used. Vegetable poisons and stupefacients, now banned, were employed in the past.

HUNTING

223 Hunting and fowling are spare-time activities. Elephants and buffa-
224 loes, which in Livingstone's time used to be chased into the Mofwe mudflats during the rainy season and killed in great numbers,(5) are no longer found [411] in Kazembe's country though some still remain on the Belgian Congo side. Large herds of lechwe antelope roam the swamp country beyond the inhabited belt. Fire-arms have displaced the traditional weapons.

DIET

251 The basic foodstuffs are cassava(6) and fish. Game, poultry, fruit
252 and wild bees' honey, supplement the diet. Cassava is soaked in water, peeled and sun-dried for storing. The root, after being pounded and ground
262 on a stone, is made into porridge and flavoured with groundnuts or other
273 relish. Sweet cassava is eaten roasted.(7) Fish is consumed fresh or dried, game fresh or smoked. Fish, when dried in the sun or over a fire, will keep for three months. Water-lily roots, on which, according to tradition, the aboriginal pygmies fed, are considered a delicacy. Native-made alcoholic beverages were millet beer(8) (still made), *Borassus* palm wine, mead(9) and a spirit distilled from maize.(10) Oil is expressed from palm
276 fruit(11) and from groundnuts and vinegar used to be made from bananas.(12) Tobacco is taken as snuff and smoked in pipes.(13) *Bhang* (hemp), was

(1) Burton, op.cit., p.252.
(2) Livingstone, op.cit., p.245.
(3) Brelsford, 2, 1947, pp.70, 71.
(4) Holmes, 1925, p.26.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.248, 276, 299.
(6) Burton, op.cit., p.40.
(7) ibid., p.101.
(8) ibid., p.43.
(9) Gamitto, II, p.26; Valdez, II, p.246.
(10) Bowdich, p.91.
(11) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.243, 278.
(12) ibid, p.272.
(13) ibid., p.251; Gamitto, I, p.401.